SCHOOL CHILDREN WRITE OWN PARTS IN A PLAY

And, More Generous Than Their Elders, Not All of Them Choose Lines Replete with Heroics.

An Interesting Experiment in Education Is Performed by the Barnard Elementary School Children.

By MARGARET BREEDON.

DID you ever see a play in which the actors had written their own lines? Probably you never have. I never had seen any such drama until one day this week. Then I saw a play with a cast of fifty-two, and each one in it had written his or her own part. True, all the fifty-two did not have speaking parts, but that only makes it all the more remarkable. For they might have, had they so chosen. It seems unbelievable that an actor should not want a speaking part (most producers will testify that usually each one wants all the lines), but then this play went against every precedent known.

In the first place, it is doubtful if any play was ever written and acted by so young a cast. Adding up the ages of all those who took part in it, and then dividing, it was found that the average age was seven and a half years. And that average, let it be stated, would not have been so high had it not been that several of the actors had arrived at the advanced age of twelve years. Most of them were six years old.

The children are the pupils of the Barnard Elementary School, and the play, "Alice in Fairyland," was given as the annual entertainment, bringing to a close the school year.

Even more interesting than the play were the rehearsals at which it was written—if such a definite word as that can be used for the inspirational way in which the play grew. The theme of the play, having been decided upon by the conversation method (for the whole affair was democratic and informal), the children sat around and decided what should happen and how it should happen. Anybody who wanted to say lines said them. Those who did not danced as fairies, or candle sprites, or butterflies, or capered around as Teddy bears, or simply stood in a row as flowers in a garden.

PHOTO OTTO SARONY CO.

Quite a lot of little ones from the Barnard Elementary School lived in the old shoe for a happy hour.

The Child's Dramatic Sense.

The play itself may not be a contribution to dramatic literature, but the manner in which it was put together (it seems difficult to find a word to describe how "Alice in Fairyland" came into being) is of interest. It shows how spontaneously children express themselves; it illustrates their natural sense of the dramatic.

Most of the children were too small to write down the lines as they said them in those strange rehearsals, and so the older girls sat with pad and pencil and took down the words and the cues. In no instance was any change made, unless, as the play developed, it seemed best to do so. And then—let all authors who have had their spirits anguished by what producers do to their plays reflect on this—the change was not made unless it met with the approbation of the boy or girl who had written it and who was to speak it.

Now and then lines were given away, as it were. One child would think of something very good for another child to say and would suggest it. Which brings out the strangest feature of all—the children seemed to want the play good, as a whole apparently, rather than to shine in the limelight themselves.

In addition to the lines, the business of the play was worked out by the actors. A dictatorial stage manager and producer over them? No, indeed! Just as some children showed an unusual aptitude for writing lines, so others came into their artistic own in the matter of devising business.

The Pot of Gold.

Take the example of Bobs Booth, seven years old. He was the Pot of Gold at the end of the rainbow. He didn't have much to say, but he had a great deal to do. It was his idea that he should try to take the gold from the wings of the butterflies.

Then Carlo Paterno suggested that it would be a nice thing to have a part for his pony. That was truly generous of Carlo for, as he was a candle sprite, he could not hope to have much to do with the pony. His generosity had its own reward, however, for one of the prettiest scenes in the play was the one where Alice, played by Bessie Fulmar, aged seven, drove away in quest of Fairyland.

Into the pony cart she put her doll, which was almost as large as she. And after she reached Fairyland, the doll came to life. It walked, it talked, it danced at the command of the Queen of the Fairies, played by May Booth. One of the children, despite his artistic temperament, has an active conscience, for he explained to me carefully that between the two acts the doll had been removed from the pony cart and in its place had been put Valeria Betts, six years old. Perhaps it was just as much the desire to surprise me as it was to give me accurate information that he told me this, for I noticed that he was more than pleased when I gasped my astonishment at the news!

And it was no easy matter, another child told me, to get a doll which was just the same size, exactly, as one of the girls so "nobody could tell the difference, unless we told 'em as we have you, and you wouldn't have known if we hadn't told you, would you?" I assured them I would never have guessed that there had been a substitution, and their pleased smiles more than repaid me for the untruth.

With fifty-two children in the cast, it was possible to use most of the favorite characters of childhood and of the inhabitants of Fairyland. There were, among others, Starlight, Sunlight, the Rainbow Lady and the trainer of the Teddy bears.

The matter of costumes and "props" was discussed in open session also. Many of the children had most decided opinions as to the frocks of fairies and the appearance of flowers, and these suggestions were followed out. Some of the older girls helped in the sewing of the costumes and with the properties.

It all seemed a marvellous thing to me, but Mrs. Rose Watson, principal of the school, said there was nothing in it surprising to any one who really knows children.

"Children are original and have the most interesting ideas when they are small," she said. "Sometimes they retain these ideas when they are older; but, too often, they seem to lose the distinctive traits which they showed when still very small. One of the problems which a teacher should face is the conserving of the originality of a child.

"Take a child's painting, for example. Before he has had any lessons or grown old enough to be self-conscious, he will oftentimes make the most interesting drawings. Then later the artistic flare seems to have gone. The work, which has been daring, in an artistic way, becomes set and conventionalized.

"A child has a feeling for all the arts and it is such a valuable thing that it should be guarded. Take the matter of plays, for example. Children have a real dramatic sense. Don't you remember when you were a little girl that you liked to have a play for your dolls? Well, they just carry that instinct on. This play was just a big doll play, with children taking the parts, instead of dolls.

"Our children have so many activities and this from which the play came is just one of them. For instance, some of the older children have a little magazine, called the "Barnard Budget." Nobody suggested this to them. It was their own idea. At first they typewrote the copies, but now they have them printed. Of course, every child in the school buys a copy, and so the expenses are paid. This little magazine is good training for them in their English work, and we feel that these plays which they write are also. Don't you think so?"

I did think so. In fact, I found myself wishing that when I went to school there had been schools where the children could have expressed themselves as these children are doing.

Mrs. Rose Watson, principal of the school, encourages individuality in her pupils.

Woman Her Own Worst Enemy?

A Feminist's Beliefs.

By WINNIFRED HARPER COOLEY.

EVERY woman retains within her own breast an adversary for the enemy!

No unjust laws, no male tyrannies, no domination from without, is so devastating as her own affection. Where a man is concerned, give her enough rope and she will hang herself!

It has been so for centuries, and it will continue to be so for some time to come. Byron remarked, with easy masculine certainty:

"Man's love is of man's life, a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence."

Strong minded ladies have violently denied this during the last half-century, and it certainly is not so universally true now as in Don Juan's time—but we cannot even to-day truthfully deny it.

Of course, "there's a reason!"

Generally speaking, no social joys can be indulged in by unmarried women except through the agency of men. Theatres, balls, parties, motor trips—all pre-suppose a male escort. The economic question is inextricably involved, for men must invite, "take" them, and pay the bills. Yet, even in the case of wealthy or of self-supporting women, who can themselves defray the expenses of social pleasures, the custom of the world makes the man the necessary escort.

If, then, women, especially when young and unwed and in conventional society, must depend on men as an entering wedge into the entire social world, how much more do they consider them as necessary for the vital joys of affection? The tremendous and all-embracing maternal instinct of every normal woman longs for an outlet. Chance throws her way some presentable male creature, whom she imediately seizes as a peg on which to hang her wonderful romantic illusions, or as a surprised object which she inundates with her floods of sentimental, maternal adoration.

The "object," recovering from the dazed condition of being loved so inordinately, regains his sanity, practises law, creates literature, builds bridges, governs cities. To the woman, love is her "whole existence"!

The effect is most unwholesome and often very irritating. She, realizing his capacity for enjoying a thousand impersonal, outside experiences, becomes possessive and jealous. He, irritated by her insistence on governing his minutest action, follows more and more feverishly activities and pleasures out in the big world—all the while muttering the ancient incantations, handed down by his ancestors of the Stone Age, "Woman's place is in the home!"

Neither realizes what joy would be in carrying on the world's work together!

New chances of escape from the thraldom of herself are being offered everywoman. But she sweeps them aside suspiciously. She hugs her chains, for they are golden, and were forged on her wrists and ankles by Love of the Man, and she erroneously believes that if she voluntarily breaks them he will despise her.

Somehow, man, successful, arrogant, free and capable, to a large extent, of doing without her, looms black in the shadow as the enemy. But all the time she worships him, and voluntarily dwells in the dusky interior of life. She will not see that the cage door is open.

The battle is a secret one. The enemies look at each other with false smiles, for the world counsels hypocrisy. It is not a fair fight. The woman is terribly handicapped, for within her heart always dwells that clever and insidious adversary of the enemy, whispering that she dare not revolt, for she is really on the enemy's side.

The Greeks had a fanciful myth, which has been put into an English poem, "Atalanta's Race." The fair Atalanta was beautiful and swift of limb, and could outstrip any Spartan youth in running. But Venus tossed three golden apples successively on her path, and she, being ahead, paused each time to pick up the lovely fruit. Her weakness in permitting herself to be distracted by the baubles caused her to lose the race.

Thus has woman lost out in the race of life—partly through her own fault. Whether we call the golden apples love of wealth and luxury, which has made her a lazy parasite, or affectionate desire, which has made her sink her ambitions and talents in love of her mate—always she has been handicapped.

The race at last seems open to all entries, with no unfair handicaps. When women arise and toss their heads to the breeze and sunshine they may win their share of all the laurels of civilization and cease being their own worst enemy.

Hers the Task of Helping Shopgirls

Educational Director of the Department Store Education Association, Miss Beulah Kennard, Describes the Work to Regenerate Working Girls, Mentally, Physically and Morally.

By MARY DIXON.

THE mental, physical and moral regeneration of the department store girl is the great task for the accomplishment of which Miss Beulah E. Kennard resigned her various positions of trust and usefulness in Pittsburgh.

Miss Kennard is educational director of the Department Store Education Association, an organization recently founded by a number of prominent social workers and of which Miss Anne Morgan is president.

"Teaching good salesmanship"—Miss Kennard was prompt in answering my inquiry about the purposes of the association—"is the main object. And that, of course, means transforming counter work from a haphazard calling into a profession."

"But I thought salesmanship was quite generally taught to the employes of the large stores. Isn't it?"

She hastened to disillusion me. "Salesmanship, yes—of a kind. But general instruction in salesmanship is not enough. It is too generalized; it might apply to selling anything, from a pin cushion to a white elephant. We seek to link up the interests of the seller with the thing she handles.

"And we go further. Good salesmanship depends, as does every other profession, on health. The girls' physical training, of which Dr. Kristine Mann, our health director, is in charge, comprises actual gymnasium work, as well as lectures on physiology and hygiene. But it is in the educational department that we make an entirely new departure. The saleswomen suffer just as much—perhaps more—from a lack of vocational consciousness and the self-reliance that goes with it as from physical ills.

"The average girl who handles a certain article in the store has practically no knowledge of its origin and manufacture. Instead of trying to inculcate a lot of vague general principles, we work from the goods upward and outward. If, for instance, we are teaching a class from the glove department, we go back to its genesis as raw material and then proceed step by step in its career until we arrive at the finished product. In this way we study the processes of tanning, stitching and so on. Incidentally we also study form, color, design and texture.

"These studies are, however, always related to the actual article handled by the pupils, thus giving them a vital interest in their work and building up social consciousness by helping them to realize that their place in the complex fabric of modern industry is a necessary and valuable one.

"For the vocational and technical instruction our classes are formed on departmental lines. For the more general work they are larger. And, remember, the classes are held during working hours."

"One hears so much about adulteration and misrepresentation," I ventured. "Isn't it strange that the stores should wish their employes to discover these trade secrets?"

"Many of the large stores have signified their willingness to co-operate with us," said Miss Kennard, "and some have already done so. On Wednesday, the 26th, we have the certification of our departmental classes at Stern Brothers', where many students will receive their certificates of graduation. The objection you stated does not apply to the great department stores. With them honesty is very emphatically the best policy. Their scale of business is such that in the long run they could not afford the falsification loathed by the consumer. We consider, by the way, that the consumer also will reap a benefit from our work. Is it not preferable to meet behind the counter an intelligent insight into your needs and understanding of qualities and tastes, rather than the desire to make a sale by dint of wheedling and beguiling alone?

"Ignorance anywhere is a danger. Take, for instance, the setting of a novice from among the stock girls at selling children's shoes. Why, any one guilty of such an orthopedic crime should be imprisoned!

"We hope also that out of our work will result a cementing of the bonds, an increased solidarity, among the girls in a shop. Instead of department isolation will be brought about store community.

"The association has been in existence about two years. My connection with it is one year old. Part of that time I have been engaged in the preliminary study of store conditions. I served for a short time behind the notion counter at Lord & Taylor's."

I had a mental vision of confronting this dignified woman behind the counter when on a shopping expedition. For a moment I imagined that I should be somewhat awed. Then I remembered that, among other things, Miss Kennard had studied scientific salesmanship, and I was reassured.

And, besides, she impresses one at first sight as an eminently practical person. She radiates a good-humored and cool efficiency, such as one would expect in one of her many and varied activities. She went to Pittsburgh many years ago as contralto soloist of a Presbyterian church. Almost immediately she became interested in social work, possibly to the detriment of her singing, but most decidedly to the advantage of the less favored inhabitants of Pittsburgh. For eighteen years Miss Kennard was president of the Pittsburgh Playground Association, a body which included in its activities not only the maintenance of playgrounds and the supervision of play, but also the establishment of vocational schools.

Miss Beulah Kennard, Educational Director of the Department Store Education Association.

Gradually I managed to elicit from Miss Kennard the details of a career unique in its usefulness.

"I was for three years instructor in the School of Education, University of Pittsburgh," said Miss Kennard. And here, by the way, she was given the honorary degree of M. A. "I lectured on industry, government, the family and social institutions in general."

"All this besides your playground and vocational work?"

"I had plenty of time. You see, I also lecture on efficiency, and the first thing for an efficiency teacher to do is to introduce that principle into his or her own life. Besides that, of course, I had my work as president of the Western Pennsylvania Association of Women Workers and as a member of the board of the National League of Women Workers. Then I served for two years on the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education.

"Writing? No, I have not done much. You see, I have been rather busy. But I am hoping to publish a book compounded of my lectures at the university. I have done some writing for the "Survey," some sociological studies for the Sage Foundation, the National Academy of Political and Social Science and the Pittsburgh "Survey"; also a few newspaper articles here and there, but my time for writing has been rather limited."

I did not doubt it!

And then—it was impossible for us to keep away from the subject—we came back to the Department Store Association.

"Part of my one year with it I have spent in making investigations in Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, Cleveland and other large cities.

"And the net result of your experiences?" I queried.

"The result was the conclusion that there is no class that requires so urgently help and the chance to help themselves as the shop girls," said Miss Kennard, "and I am going to do my level best to see that they get the chance."

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By ALICE DUER MILLER

The Happy Obstructionist.

"Oh, no, I don't approve of giving women the vote.
Women," he said, "are something divine, apart,
Something mysterious, precious, fair and remote,
Caring for nothing but love, religion and art."

"But women are really not like that," said I.
"I like to think of them so," was his reply.

"I like to think of the mother, serene, at ease,
Living her life in a sunny, vine-clad cot,
Drawing her happy babies about her knees,
Teaching them love—for that is a mother's lot."

"But very few mothers can live like that," said I.
"But I like to picture them thus," was his reply.

"Think of the women," I said, "who suffer and toil,
Of her without beauty or love, not mother or wife."
"Hush, hush," he answered, "why do you want to spoil
The vision, the joy, the whole romance of life!"

"But truth has its own romance and joy," said I.
"I like my fancies better," was his reply.

AN UNSUSPECTED TALENT.

"It is God's own organic law," said Representative Beyer, of Pennsylvania, an anti-suffragist, "which provides that men through all creation have been fit to govern not only themselves, but to govern others."

We append a news item from "The New York Sun" of May 19, to show how government is carried on by the august body of which Mr. Beyer is a member:

"Harrisburg, Penn., May 18.—The free and continued use of 'sneezing powders' and malodorous chemicals and the bombardment of members with pamphlets, books, newspapers and 'spitballs' have developed as the latest and most effective means of halting the passage of legislation of unpopular character in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives."

A MENACE TO THE HOME.

"Even in the first infants' perambulator the mid-Victorian perceived a danger to the home and the truly womanly—because it is easier to wheel a child than to carry it. What will prevent a mother from wandering from home many hours every day," asked the Lady's Newspaper.— **Edna Kenton in "Harper's Weekly."**

THE REFORMERS.

Our canvasser approached the red and brown mass of a certain well-known club.

"Are you in favor of perambulators for babies?" she asked a member who was going up the steps.

He turned instantly. "No, indeed," he answered. "It is a suggestion repugnant to every natural instinct. If nature had intended babies to be wheeled, she would have provided for it herself."

"Yes," said another member who now drew near, "this is just one more effort on the part of women to rebel against the limitations of their sex, a new effort to be men. Because they see men wheeling wheelbarrows, they must have something to wheel to. They do not seem to think that the differentiation of sex is more funda——"

"No," interrupted a younger member, a man hardly seventy-five years old, "man's chivalry is based entirely on the recollection of having been carried in his mother's arms. Women should understand that in taking away this precious memory they are destroying all their special privileges and immunities."

"Besides," added the first speaker, with cold sarcasm, "I question if the majority of babies in this state have demanded perambulators. The noisy minority——"

Our canvasser interrupted. "I think, gentlemen," she said, "that perhaps you do not know that perambulators have been in common use for over fifty years."

At this they looked grave.

"Are you quite sure?" they asked.

Our canvasser was quite sure.

"Oh, in that case," they said in unison, "we are of course in favor of them. We are not illiberal. We are in favor of every reform for women except those in opposition to her true nature."

And so they tottered away into their club, defining among themselves the true nature of woman; and our canvasser, with that lack of logic so common to her sex, wrote them all down as at present opposed to woman suffrage.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEARN ING.

**"To know the mistress' humor right,
See if the maids be clean and tight;
If Betty waits without her stays,
She copies but her lady's ways.
When Miss comes in, with boisterous shout,
And drops no courtesy going out,
Depend upon't, mamma is one,
Who reads, or drinks, too much alone."**
(Fables for the Fair Sex, London, about 1746.)

OLD STUFF.

Mist-bombs—bombs that explode and spread a mist about them—may be a new invention in physical warfare, but their use has long been understood in anti-suffrage arguments.